

21 die, 13 injured in fresh Plateau attack

From Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi, Jos

NO fewer than 21 persons were killed and 13 injured, about 01.26 a.m., yesterday, in Heipang village, Barkin Ladi Local Council of Plateau State, by suspected Fulani militia.

Dung Mark, his wife and children were among the deceased.

Governor Caleb Mutfwang expressed grief over the bloody attacks in Heipang and Mangu, urging security operatives to fish out the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

In a statement by his Director of Press Affairs, Gyang Bere, yesterday, the governor described the deteriorating security situation in some parts of the state as unfortunate, urging greater collaboration between community leaders and security agencies to prevent further attacks.

Also, National Publicity Secretary of Berom Youth Movement (BYM), Rwang Tengwong, condemned the killings.

Attacks on communities in the state by herdsmen, recently, seem to have intensified, despite the recent visit of

the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt-Gen. Taoreed Lagbaja, to Mangu. During the visit, he charged the troops to clamp down on the marauding herdsmen.

The State Police Command confirmed the killings through the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Alfred Alabo, who said the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of Barkin Ladi immediately led a combined team of policemen and personnel from other security agencies to restore normalcy to the affected communities.

He added that the police had

emplaced modalities to ensure the arrest of the perpetrators.

Bere said: "The attackers, who came around 01.26a.m., killed 17 persons in Batin village of Heipang town, while four were killed in Rayogot. "After the attack in Heipang, vigilante members from Rayogot sighted the killers and tried to stop them, but lost four men in the process."

Prior to the attack, *The Guardian* gathered, there was a robbery incident that claimed one life along Heipang Highway. Identity of the criminals was not known.